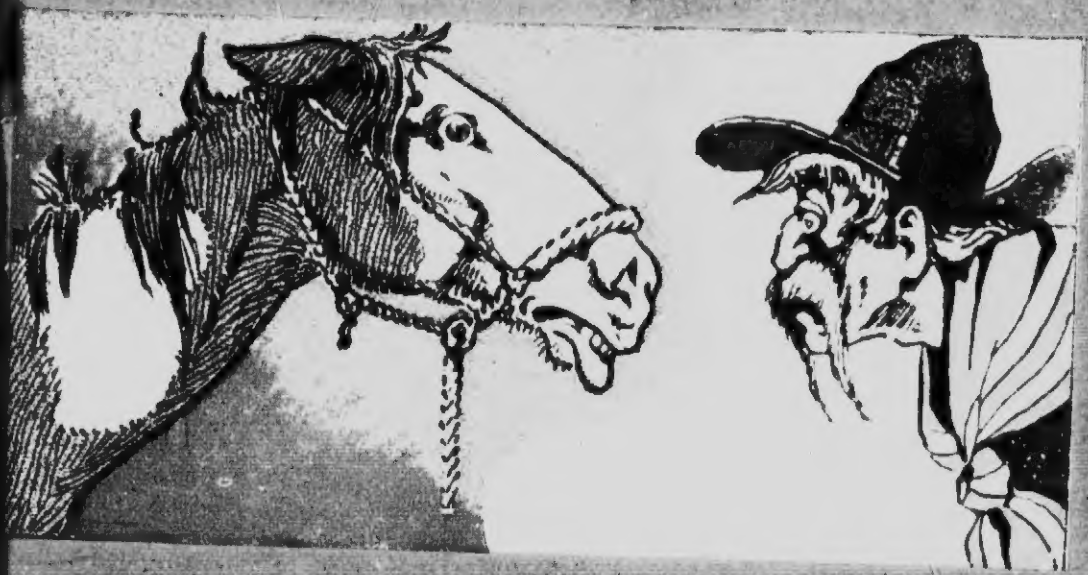
TRAGEDY OF THE SWAY-BACKED PINTO



BY

JOHN INNES

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TRAGEDY OF THE SWAY-BACKED PINTO

by

JOHN INNES

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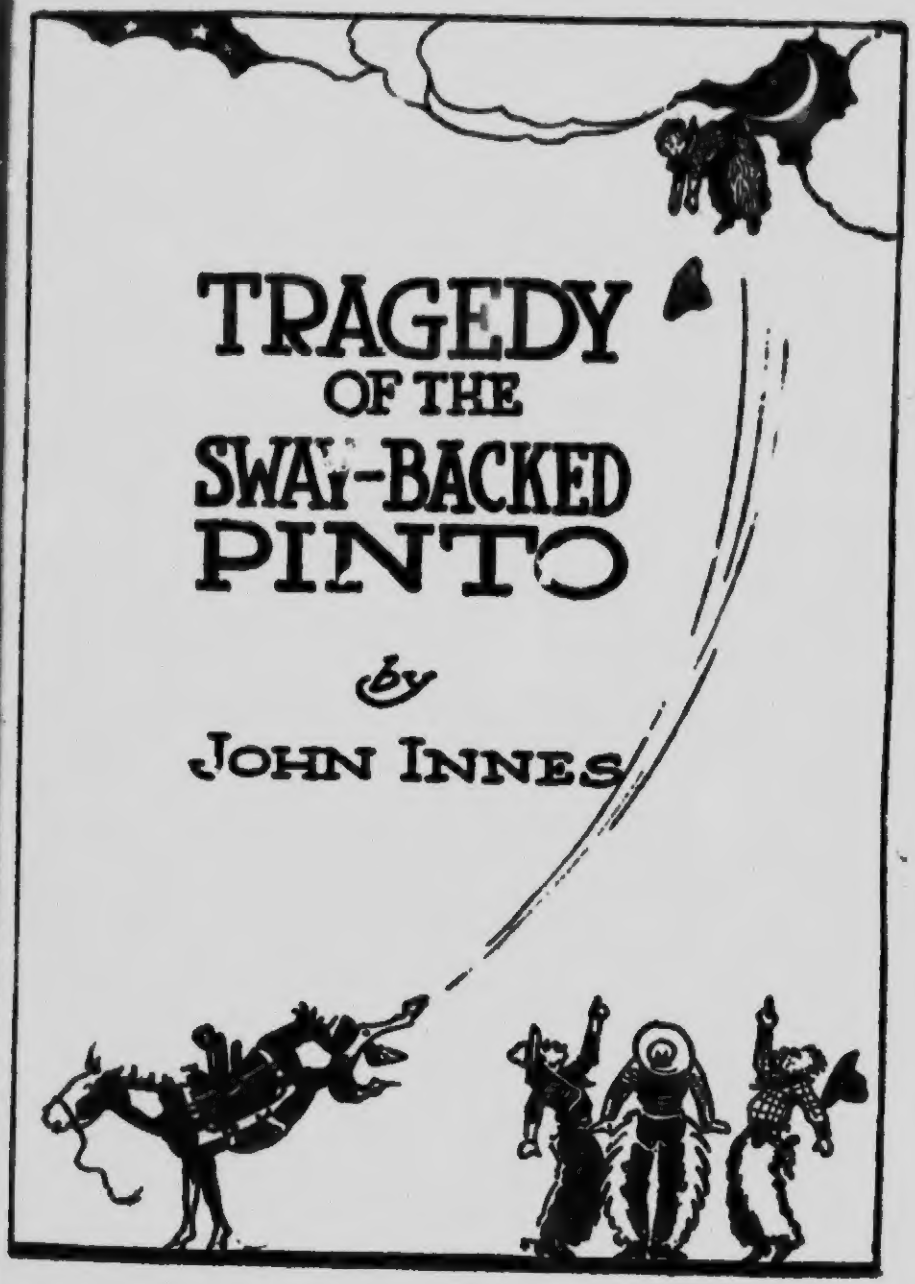

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Dear Publisher:

I got my "Sway-backed Pinto" verses and also your letter about my feet. I'm sending the verses back and want to state, right here, that my feet are all right. What are you fussing about my feet for, anyway; does my M.S. look as though I wrote with them?

Next, you want to know what the verses mean, or if they have a moral. As far as I am concerned, anybody who can squeeze a moral out of the "Pinto" is welcome to keep it. I did think of running in something quite original, like "Chickens come home to roost," as a sort of a moral, till I sprung the idea on a friend of mine who raises white leghorns and has a lot of colored neighbors, and he glares at me and says: "The h——l they do!" That sort of discouraged me, so I cut out the moral idea.

Lastly, you want the stuff dedicated to somebody. I have tried to dedicate it for a whole week, and the mildest thing any of the folks I thought were my friends said was that if I dedicated anything like that to them it would be my last act in this Vale of Sin. So I guess you had better just say that the "Sway-backed Pinto" is dedicated, in respectful astonishment, to everybody who pays real money for it.

Yours truly,

(Signed) John Innes.

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TRAGEDY
OF THE
SWAY-BACKED PINTO

By John Innes

The sway-backed pinto had an air of quiet introspection,
His eye was fixed an' glassy, an' of a china blue;
He'd hang his head and bat his ears as though in deep reflection,
Just like he'd never done a thing he didn't ought to do.

FERR

Tragedy of the Sway-backed Pinto

THE sway-backed pinto had a sort of toggle-jointed motion:
He sure could pitch and hump hisself most beautiful to see.
He 'd downed old Dave an' Andy—them we soaked in healin' lotion.
He bust the neck of Jerry—him we planted mournfully.

THE sway-backed pinto's record was a mush of horrid actions;
Of kicks an' bites an' bruises an' a heap of things to boot;
He 'd took the Ten Commandments an' he 'd smashed them all to fractions,
So we turned him loose an' cussed him for a useless, buckin' brute.

Tragedy of the Sway-backed Pinto

It was "Ichabod" we named him, as beyond
the range of pity,
He was shunned by men an' hosses, like
the Author of all Sin;
Till a mining man came snoopin' round, from
some far eastern city,
Enquirin' for a pack hoss—so we brought
the pinto in.

We swore that beast was gentle as a blushin'
country .irgin;
Jamb full of tender feelin's an' respect for
human life:
That he'd pack an' pull like blazes, that he
didn't need no urgin',
An 'd been used for totin' eggs to town, by
Pete Lechambre's wife.

Tragedy of the Sway-backed Pinto

THAT miner man was tickled, like a school-
boy with a nickle.
He said he had been yearnin' long for just
that kind of hoss.
Then he counted forty bills out, an' our tears
began to trickle,
As we wondered if he had a wife or kids
to mourn his loss.

YES, we sold that sway-backed pinto for a
bunch of cracklin' dollars,
An' we watched him o'er the landscape till
he was out of sight;
Then we went an' purchased "red-eye," an'
it naturally follers
We didn't do no work that day, nor didn't
sleep that night.

Tragedy of the Sway-backed Pinto

We squatted round the camp-fire an' we laughed an' joked an' hollered,
An' passed around the pizen-jug, as blithe as bugs in May;
An' snorted as we pondered on the boodle we had collared
For the sway-backed, wall-eyed circus freak that miner took away.

The skeeters they was bitin' in a manner free an' fearful,
Till we slapped an' cussed like pilgrims as we made the bottle pass;
An' Pete had just imbibed enough to make him kind'r tearful,
When we hears the thud, thud, thuddin' of a hoss upon the grass.

Tragedy of the Sway-backed Pinto

THEN through the midnight silence cut a
sound that made us shiver;
A fearful, shriekin', shakin', piercin', ter-
rifyin' note,
That started 'way up high an' draggled down-
ward with a quiver—
A yell we'd heard before—like half hyena,
half coyote.

WE stared at one another, for to see if we
was dreamin'.
The skeeters chawed in safety, for we all
forgot to smack.
The thuddin' louder—louder. Then again
that horrid screamin'.
It was!! It was!!! We knew it. That
damned pinto comin' back.

DYNAMITE

Tragedy of the Sway-backed Pinto

We could hear him kick, kick, kickin' at the
skeeters as he travelled,
His ugly head came bobbin' up within the
fire's glow;
His bridle was all busted an' his tie-line all
unravelled,
He gave a squeal an' kick or two, to say
that we must go.

We scrambles round an' grabs up sticks an'
rocks an' other missiles,
An' Pete pulls out his gun, as Pinto backs
into the light;
But he lowers it kind'r sudden, an' points an'
sort'r whistles:
Then we spies a pack strapped to him that
was labelled, "Dynamite."

Tragedy of the Sway-backed Pinto

How we scooted through the darkness an'
we shivered 'mid the grasses,
An' we pondered on the Judgment in a way
that wasn't sweet;
An' we cussed that sway-backed pinto, an' we
cussed ourselves for asses,
As we spied our bottles gleamin' all amongst
his kickin' feet.

Then Pete he rose among us, an' his voice
with grief did quiver;
He says: "Gents, this here's a-gettin' back
agin us for our sin;
That there pinto has the dead drop on our
grog, an' blow my liver,
That miner was a stranger an' we shorely
took him in.

Tragedy of the Sway-backed Pinto

"SEE the fruits, you sinful long-horns!" Then
he waved towards the fire,
An' as he did the flames leaped up with
snappin' an' with crack
Like pistol shots. One ember than the others
shootin' higher,
Popped out and stuck amid the hair upon
the pinto's back.

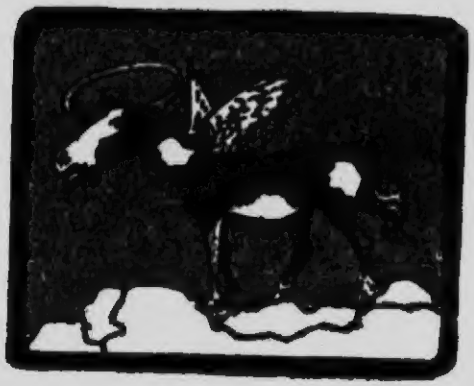
A SQUEAL, a plunge, a flash! Then some-
thing flung us on our faces.
The whole earth rocked an' reeled awhile,
the air was full of smoke;
We seemed to sleep through ages an' to pass
through endless spaces,
An' the early dawn was breakin' when the
gang of us awoke.

Tragedy of the Sway-backed Pinto

THE fire was gone, the hoss was gone. Our clothes was awful tattered.
Pete groaned, an' pointed at the tallest tree upon the ranch.
We looked, an' all the leaves was stripped. with gore the trunk was spattered,
An' one long rag of pinto hide swayed from the topmost branch.

. . . . . .

WE wonder if his blowed-up ghost has reached the Heaven of Hosses,
Or if his china eye will gleam amongst the speerit nags.
Pete says he'll bet he'll kick 'bout half the planets off their courses,
An' chaw feathers off the angels what bring round the feedin' bags.

HEY! CUT THAT OUT
OUCH!!
FINIS

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